A REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON BOLIVIA

Eugene Fallon's article in the State Port Pilot of February 7, 1962, presented some information on an early inhabitant of "the settlement astride a dirt trail heading toward Town Creek". John Peter Cox was brought to this community at an early age by his father and could barely remember any other place. As he grew to adulthood he added his efforts to those of other citizens who hoped to get mail service nearer than the delivery "a dozen or more miles west" on the old Georgetown Road.

By 1892 sufficient information had been forwarded to the U.S. Post Office Department, including a name for the local Post Office. Reading the next letter he received from the Post Office Department, John Peter Cox learned that he was acceptable as postmaster but that the office name he had submitted was already in use; therefore, it was necessary to submit another name. His second choice was "Bolivia", and this name was accepted by the Post Office Department. Peter Cox was described by Mr. Fallon as a "self-taught man" who helped his community get better mail service and other conveniences.

Mrs. Lucille Blake compiled from the National Archives in Washington, dates of their appointments:

3 June 1892 John P. Cox	10 March 1924 Samuel P. Cox
11 April 1914 G.L. Edwards	29 January 1944 Mrs. Evelyn S. Walls
11 July 1914 John C. Mezzill	4 July 1944 Mrs. Vera Aycock
25 August 1917 Britton Smith	1 July 1947 Mrs. Ruby B. Edwards
29 November 1922 Joseph P. Stanley	

Mercer Cox, son of the first postmaster, recalled working at the shingle mill which he said came to Bolivia in 1910 and was located about a quarter of a mile west of old Georgetown Road. It operated about ten years producing shingles and employing about a hundred men; some of these workers came from outside the community. Later a large sawmill was set up and operated.

and operated by W. D. McKeithan. Another larger swamill operation was
owned by J. D. Johnson who later built in Bolivia the first motel in
Brunswick County.

Mrs. Debbie Hewett's third grade of Bolivia School. 1981-82,
assisted by some local citizens, collected information and wrote their
community's story in a typewritten booklet "The History of Bolivia".
The main sources for this history were the Bolivia Town Charter,
Dr. Lawrence Lee' History of Brunswick County, local cemetery records,
and recollections of citizens in the area. Some excerpts from this
booklet are quoted in the following:

" The name "Bolivia" was taken from the South American country
with the same name. Fertilizer bags were being shipped to Brunswick
County from the South American country. These bags were stamped with
the name "Bolivia". Since the townspeople were looking for a name
uncommon is this area, they decided to call their town "Bolivia".

The original charter for Bolivia stated that the town should
have a mayor and three aldermen. When Bolivia was incorporated in
1911, the mayor was J. P. Cox. The three aldermen were G. L. Edwar ds,
J. H. Knox and A. T. Danford.

. . . .

"In the year 1920, Bolivia's population was 199. There were thirty-
five farming families living in Bolivia at that time Bolivia then had
six saw mills, the tobacco warehouse of the Bolivia Warehouse Company,
and telephone communications. At this time Bolivia·also had its first
school. It as a four-room school house that was heated with a wood
stove. There were four teachers employed at the school. The older
boys in the class cut the wood, which was donated by the townspeople.
The older girls were responsible for cleaning the rooms. This building
later became the teacherage, providing housing for teachers and their
families.

In 1927-28 a new brick school was opened in Bolivia. It was
called Town Creek Consolidated School. The school was located were
the new school now stands. Later the name was changed to Bolivia High
School.

. . . .

"During the 1930's, the tobacco warehouse business declined slowly.
Bolivia's hopes to become a major "tobacco town" no longer seemed a
reality. Eventually the building was sold to house a sawmill and planer

mill where materials were manufactured and planed for sale.

. . . .

"By 1940 Bolivia's population had risen to 203. The school
continued to grow. In 1947 Bolivia school had fourteen class
rooms. an auditorium, a gymnasium, an agriculture building,a
teacherage and a cafeteria."

In his "History of Brunswick County", Dr. Lawrence Lee included some
Bolivia information, the sources of which were the Federal Court
Census Records, The Morning Star Newspaper, the North Carolina Yearbook,
North Carolina Laws, and Brunswick County Commissioners' Minutes.
Most of this information is concerned with the Bolivia community's
development after 1900 and the growing hope of becoming the county
seat; the initial incorporation of the town in 1911, and the subsequent
arrival of the Wilmington. Brunswick and Southern Railroad.

Four years after the town's incorporation, the "North Carolina
Yearbook" listed for Bolivia a post office, six general stores, two
sawmills, ome hotel, a livery stable, and two churches.

In 1919 the North Carolina General Assembly paased an act
directing Brunswick County Commissioners to arrange for an election
April 20, 1920, to ddcide whether to relocate the county seat to Bolivia,
to Supply, or to let it remain in Southport. After two elections,
Bolivia was designated as the county seat; but the decision was challenged
and finally settled in the State Supreme Court on March 30,1921, when
the injunction of the lower court was upheld. Thec county seat remained
in Southport.

In 1922, after Bolivia lost the county seat and lost the Bolivia
Warehouse Company, the Town Charter was allowed to lapse and was not
reactivitaed until 1961.

Further information on Bolivia is being collected and will be
used in a more complete article later.

- J. M. Holden